

March 2011

# Bulova Byline

[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/chairman](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/chairman) (703) 324-2321 [chairman@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:chairman@fairfaxcounty.gov)



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With the County Executive's presentation on February 22<sup>nd</sup>, an **Advertised Fiscal Year 2012 Budget** is on the street for our community's review, discussion and feedback. Inside this Byline is a list of public meetings and forums where County staff will provide briefings on the budget and attendees can ask questions and make comments. Additionally, formal public hearings are scheduled for March 29th, 30th and 31st. All hearings are televised on Cable Channel 16 and speakers may sign up to testify by either calling 703-324-3151 or signing up on the County's website at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/bosclerk/speaker\\_bos.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/bosclerk/speaker_bos.htm).

Detailed information about the Advertised Budget, and previous Adopted Budgets, can be found on the County's website at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dmb/](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dmb/). The Board of Supervisors will "mark-up" (make changes to the Advertised Budget) at our Board Meeting on April 12th with formal adoption on April 26th.

A brief summary of the County Executive's Advertised Budget:

## **Advertised Tax Rate of \$1.09**

- Same as current tax rate
- The Advertised rate becomes the upper ceiling for the tax rate that will be adopted by the Board in April. We can adopt something lower, but not higher.
- Each penny of the Tax Rate is equal to \$19.3 million.
- Because of a modest increase in property values a tax rate of \$1.09 would mean an increase of \$110.55 in the average taxpayer's annual bill.

## **Property Values**

- After four years of falling **residential real estate values**, assessments for FY2012 are estimated to be a **modest increase of 2.34%**.
- Homes are beginning to sell again and, according to MLS the average price of homes sold increased by 8.9%. We are still experiencing foreclosures with a total of 842 in December, an increase of 5.8% over the previous year.
- Commercial values, after having plunged 18% last year, show a surprise **increase** this year of 3.73% for a combined increase in our Real Estate Tax Base of **3.27%**.
- Commercial and residential real estate taxes make up the majority (62.2%) of the revenue that the County receives to provide county services. Our second largest source of revenue is from the personal property tax (15.5%).

**Fiscal Year 2012 Budget**

- **General Fund Disbursements** (Schools + General County) = **\$3.38 billion**
  - 5% decrease from FY 2011
- **General Fund Direct Expenditures** (does not include School Transfer) = **\$1.24 billion**
  - 1.79% decrease from FY 2011
  - In accordance with direction provided to agencies after adoption of the FY 2011, the FY 2012 budget includes \$9.8 million in reductions and reorganizations in County agencies.
- **School Transfer = \$1.61 billion**
  - No change from FY 2011. The School Board's request is for \$1.659, an increase of \$48.8 million, or 3%. Per Virginia constitution, the Board of Supervisors does not have "line item" authority over the School Budget.
- **School Transfer for Debt Service = \$163.5 million**
  - An increase of \$2.8 million from FY 2011

**Compensation**

- The School Budget has assumed an increase in compensation (2% market rate adjustment plus step increases) for all School employees. The School Board's requested increase in their Transfer would cover the cost of this increase.
- The General County Budget does not assume any increases in compensation. While we are seeing some modest signs of recovery, we are not yet out of the woods.

**Flexibility/Choices**

The County Executive's Budget includes an available balance of \$30 million, which could be used to reduce the tax rate, address unfunded needs/requests or hold in reserve as a hedge against future downturns or reductions by the federal government or the state. You can weigh in on this and other budget related matters by going to [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/survey/fy12\\_budget\\_comment.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/survey/fy12_budget_comment.htm) in addition to scheduled town meetings and public hearings. **A list of district budget town hall meetings can be found on page 9.**

Adoption of the budget is the most important thing our Board does. When we adopt a budget, we are investing in the priorities of our community. It is critical that our residents are at the table with us as spending (and saving) decisions are made. I look forward to working with you during the weeks ahead!

Sincerely,



Sharon Bulova – Chairman, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors

## Chairman Bulova Cuts Ribbon on I-66 HOV Ramps

At long last, the **HOV ramps on I-66 at Monument Drive and Stringfellow Road** are open to all traffic during off-peak hours and on weekends. While opening the ramps will not solve all the traffic problems on I-66, it **will immediately ease congestion along that route as well as US-50, the Fairfax County Parkway, and Route 28.**

Opening these ramps during off-peak hours will also give motorists another way to avoid the construction happening as VDOT adds a new interchange where the **Fairfax County Parkway and the Fair Lakes Parkway intersect.**

At a June 2010 Board meeting **I directed county transportation staff to dislodge the initiative**, which had been stalled pending the compilation and submission to the Federal Highway Administration of an Interchange Modification Report assessing the impact of the change. The project began in 2007, but only came to fruition

after county staff got involved last summer.



With Gov. Bob McDonnell at the ribbon cutting (2/28/2011)

Our transportation staff worked diligently with staff at the Virginia Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration on this project so that our commuters can take advantage of ramps that would have otherwise continued to sit unused. **I commend the Fairfax County Department of Transportation for their efforts.**

## Board Approves Redistricting Schedule Changes

Due to some new deadlines for this year's elections approved by the General Assembly in Richmond, Fairfax County has made some changes to its schedule for redrawing the lines that make up our nine magisterial districts.

We will now hold a **public hearing on redistricting on Tuesday, April 12 at 4pm.** We will also **adopt our redistricting plan at our regular Board of Supervisors meeting on April 26.**

The reasons for these changes were highlighted at our Feb. 22 meeting by Legislative Committee Chairman (and Lee District Supervisor) Jeff McKay. Supervisor McKay pointed out that a bill passed by the House and Senate, HB 1507, moved back the June 14 primary to August 23, a change we had expected.

However, the bill also moves back the deadline for mailing in absentee ballots to July 27. Therefore,

we must adopt our redistricting plan on April 26 in order to give adequate time to meet the new state deadlines.

In order to comply with Section 5 of the federal Voting Rights Act, we are required to "preclear" our redistricting plans with the U.S. Department of Justice. This preclearance is a 61-day procedure, so this also contributed to our decision to adopt the plan on April 26.

Residents can participate in the redistricting process by going to [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/redistricting](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/redistricting). There, you can offer suggestions and sign up to speak at the April 12 hearing.



## Private Sector Energy Task Force Begins Work

In ancient times, energy efficiency meant keeping the tribal cooking fires well-fed with branches and twigs gathered from the nearby forest. The gathering activity was not without some effort on the part of the tribe.

Over the centuries, we've found easier ways of providing energy to cook our food, heat and cool our homes, support commerce and operate emerging tools and technologies.

Today, most of our energy sources are from fossil fuels such as coal, oil and natural gas and far too much of it is imported from other countries. Regardless of the origins, our reliance on fossil fuels is not sustainable and does not provide long-term supply security. It also takes its toll on the environment as it is dug, pumped or blasted out of the earth.

Thirty years ago, a similar story unfolded in Europe. Faced with potentially crippling supply threats, weak economies and serious environmental degradation countries such as Finland and Germany framed new energy policies around long-term supply reliability, technical flexibility and transportation alternatives.



Fairfax County has been a pioneer in energy innovation. An example is our Waste-to-Energy facility in Lorton, where heat from burning garbage is converted into energy that is then used to run the plant.

Essential elements of our Environmental Agenda include the efficient use of energy resources, the promotion of energy conservation and support for alternative energy sources. We have made notable strides towards improving the energy efficiency of our County buildings, facilities and operations – but we can do more. Real progress can only be achieved in partnership with the private sector.

Redevelopment in Fairfax County, will offer significant opportunities for creativity and collaboration that we must explore. Additionally, technology is emerging that will help our residents and corporate neighbors save money and precious natural resources as we heat and cool our homes and offices and operate machinery and tools.

**On February 24th I convened the first meeting of a Fairfax County Private Sector Energy Task Force.** The purpose of the Task Force is to bring together leadership in the business community, utilities operating in Fairfax County, and institutions such as INOVA, George Mason University, and Northern Virginia Community College to define steps our community can take to position ourselves as a leader in the area of energy efficiency, sustainability and “green” technology.

The Task Force, which is charged with presenting its recommendations to the Board of Supervisors this summer, is chaired by Leo Schefer, President of the Washington Airports Task Force.

You can follow the work of the Task Force at: [fairfaxcounty.gov/chairman/energytaskforce.htm](http://fairfaxcounty.gov/chairman/energytaskforce.htm)

## 2011 Native Tree and Shrub Seedling Sale Going on Now

The district's annual seedling sale makes low-cost native shrub and tree seedlings available to Northern Virginia residents. Seedling packages go on sale each year in January and are available for pick-up in mid-April. Trees and shrubs help cleanse water, prevent soil erosion, provide habitat, cool our climate and clean our air. Consider adding native trees and shrubs to your community today!

Visit <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/nvswcd/seedlingsale.htm> for more information and to see what trees and shrubs are being offered this year.

## Incinerator Negotiations to Wrap Up This Month

Over the past several months, County staff has been negotiating with Covanta Fairfax, Inc., the operators of the **I-95 Waste-to-Energy Facility**, also known as the Lorton Incinerator, to explore options presented by the expiration of the long-term contract between Fairfax County and Covanta.

Fairfax County has conducted an extensive public outreach effort that included three community meetings and a public hearing held at the Feb. 22 Board of Supervisors meeting **where 27 speakers weighed in**.

After the public hearing, the Board issued two directives to County staff:

[Read the County staff's assessment and recommendation here](#)

First, County staff was directed to come to the Board on March 8 with a set of contract terms that best serve our County residents for our approval. Once approved, County staff **will negotiate with Covanta to extend the service contract based on those terms**. Second, **if Covanta does not agree to our terms, County staff will begin preparations to purchase the plant from Covanta**.

I believe this method will put Fairfax County in the best position – **we either get the service contract we need with Covanta, or we purchase the facility from Covanta**. The Board will make a decision based on what is best for the residents of Fairfax County.

[E-mail your questions or concerns directly to County staff here](#)

The purchase of the facility, if approved, would pay for itself through the sale of **revenue bonds** (bonds paid for by revenue generated by the facility). Money from the general fund that would otherwise go to schools or parks or any other County service will not go toward the purchase of the facility.

However, even though the purchase will be directly paid for through revenue the plant generates, there are risks associated with owning and operating a waste energy plant that the County may have to assume if it bought the incinerator.

Savings can be realized in the long term if we buy it because we will set the rates. Right now we differ with Covanta over what the rate, or tipping fee, should be, but have been able to negotiate a good rate in the past.

The Board will have to decide whether this is the right move at the right time. During a down economy we must take advantage of lower prices. But we also cannot afford to commit scarce County resources unless it makes absolute sense.

**Background:** The three options for future use of the facility presented by the end of the original 20-year contract were: allow the contract to expire and the market to determine the cost and availability of use; negotiate a new long-term contract similar to the current contract that includes price and capacity stipulations; purchase the facility and contract with Covanta to operate it.

[Learn more about County Executive Tony Griffin's recommendation here](#)

Staff recommended the third option, that the County purchase the facility. The Board of Supervisors must make a decision by April 4 according to terms in the existing contract, which expires in 2016. This is the only window of opportunity the County has the option of purchasing the facility, according to the contract.



## CONNECTOR Route Changes Coming to Accommodate BRAC Moves

Fairfax County staff has been working tirelessly behind the scenes to prepare for the arrival of new employees at the Engineer Proving Grounds, the new home of the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency, and at the main post of Ft. Belvoir as part of BRAC.

In the coming months, **we will unveil an updated network of Fairfax Connector bus routes meant to improve service in South County as they absorb the thousands of workers relocating to Fairfax County.**

In April, staff will begin a **broad public outreach effort**, through social media like Twitter and Facebook, and **staff will be on site at park-and-ride lots and even on the buses.** Public comments on the proposed route and schedule changes will be collected throughout this process and analyzed in July. In **August, staff will finalize the schedules**, begin training drivers, and continue to make some behind the scenes adjustments to ensure the buses run on time.

These updates will also include new buses, and will affect around 19,000 hours of service for the next year. Funding for these new buses and increase in service will come from the Commercial and Industrial fund, which is earmarked for critical transportation improvements just like this.

As the BRAC relocations continue (staff began moving to the NGA in January), Fairfax County will continue to identify solutions and make adjustments to make the transition as smooth as possible both for the employees and for County residents.

“Like” them on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/fairfaxconnector](http://www.facebook.com/fairfaxconnector), or follow them on Twitter @ffxconnector to make sure you’re the first to know about all the exciting changes coming.



## Freddie Mac Foundation Awards \$150,000 to Help End Homelessness

Thanks to a generous grant from the Freddie Mac Foundation — **secured by the Fairfax County Office to Prevent and End Homelessness** — the housing location services in our community will get a significant boost. Good Shepherd Housing and Family Services, which coordinates the Housing locator Network, will be utilizing this grant to **hire two new housing locators this**

**month.** These housing locators will work with seven emergency and transitional housing programs that currently do not have access to housing location services. It is estimated that over the next year, their knowledge, skills and experience will expedite the move of more than 135 families and individuals who are homeless back into permanent housing.

## Environmental Stewardship Brochures Now Available

The Fairfax County Park Authority has published a series of brochures which explains stewardship and its benefits to the public. This brochure series is funded in large measure by a grant from the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors in support of the county's environmental agenda.

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/resources/stewardshipbrochures.htm>

## County to Hold Public Outreach Meetings for Tysons Access Study

Multimodal access to the new Tysons Corner Metro stations is an essential part of the vision the Board of Supervisors has for Tysons' redevelopment. To create a plan for that access, we commissioned the Tysons Metrorail Stations Access Management Study in early 2010.

**The ultimate goal of the TMSAMS effort is to ensure that high quality public transit, pedestrian and bicycle access is provided to the stations.**

Part of the TMSAMS effort is public outreach. This month, the Fairfax County Department of Transportation will hold three information sessions.

- **Tuesday, March 8** at McLean High School at 7:00pm-9:00pm
- **Wednesday, March 23** at George C. Marshall High School at 7:00pm-9:00pm
- **Thursday, March 24** at Westbriar Elementary School at 7:00pm-9:00pm
- A fourth meeting will be held in central Tysons Corner

Using information collected through the public participation program, the Advisory Group will identify areas where additional planning is needed as well as prioritize pedestrian, bicycle and transit improvements necessary to access the new Metrorail stations.

For more information on TMSAMS and the Comprehensive Plan for Transforming Tysons Corner, visit [fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/tysonscorner/](http://fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/tysonscorner/)



## What to Do in Case of a Power Outage – *From Dominion*

Dominion asks its customers to follow certain guidelines in order to remain safe and to help them effectively restore power as soon as possible. In the case of a storm or major outage event, please remember the following:

### **If your electric service is interrupted:**

Call Dominion at 1-866-DOM-HELP (1-866-366-4357) to report an outage. The more outage reports Dominion receives from different customers, the better they are able to pinpoint the location and cause of the outage. Your call will be answered either by call-center representatives or by an automated voice response unit. This is the quickest way to report an outage or downed power line.

**You may also report an outage online** at [www.dom.com/dominion-virginia-power/index.jsp](http://www.dom.com/dominion-virginia-power/index.jsp)

When reporting your outage, whether via phone or online, be sure to enter the phone number where you can best be reached in case Dominion needs to contact you for more information or to provide an update. After reporting your outage, you can locate and track restoration of specific outage locations in your area on the Dominion website's Interactive Outage Map.

You can access the map at [outagemap.dom.com/DomComFlexOutageViewer/index.html](http://outagemap.dom.com/DomComFlexOutageViewer/index.html)

**Stay away** from fallen wires and debris. **Treat** all fallen wires as if they are energized. **Turn off** all unnecessary appliances, but **leave one light on** so you will know when your power is restored.

## Community Spotlight: Falls Church Presbyterian and Safe Haven

*This article was written by Rob Paxton of Safe Haven. If you would like your organization highlighted in next month's Community Spotlight, email Clayton Medford at [clayton.medford@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:clayton.medford@fairfaxcounty.gov)*

**Safe Haven**, the day shelter for the homeless and hungry serving the Baileys Crossroads/Falls Church area would not be what it is today if not for the assistance from other churches in this area. One of those churches that I would like to highlight is Falls Church Presbyterian, located at [225 East Broad Street \(Route 7\) in Falls Church](#).

Though technically sitting just inside the Falls Church City limits, this church serves many of the homeless and poor who are living in the Route 7 corridor in Fairfax County. Falls Church Presbyterian has roots going back to the early 19th century and is now a thriving, diverse congregation of more than 500 active members.

Besides serving healthy, home cooked meals to over 120 homeless and hungry people at Safe

Haven, Falls Church Presbyterian recently started a monthly dinner this month to further reach out to the hungry in the Falls Church area. Appropriately called "Welcome Table", members of the congregation, led by Mary Hobbie wife of interim Pastor John Smoot will be serving on the 3rd Wednesday of each month.

Doors open at 5:30, and dinner is served from 6-7PM. **Anyone needing a healthy home cooked dinner may attend.** The church is served by two bus routes: Route 7- 28 A/B (Fairfax St. stop) or Lee Highway – 2 B/C (2 blocks east of Broad St.). Enter through the front entrance, marked by "Welcome Table" banner.

For more information, Please email Diane Hendricks [DHendricks@FallsChurchPresby.org](mailto:DHendricks@FallsChurchPresby.org) (703)532-6518 for Welcome Table information, or Rob Paxton ([Paxton@LNF.com](mailto:Paxton@LNF.com)) for Safe Haven information.

## Changing Lives through Literature Program Doing Just That

The **Changing Lives through Literature program** in Fairfax County has received more national attention. The program was highlighted in a report on how libraries across the country are using innovative ways to meet community priorities published by the **International City/County Management Association**. This follows a feature on the syndicated radio program Bob Edwards Show last fall. It deserves the attention!

Changing Lives through Literature is used as an alternative to formal court action for troubled juveniles, and in conjunction with probation and parole for adults. The library partners with the Virginia Department of Corrections and the Fairfax County courts to present a discussion of literature related to friendship, values, choices and consequences in an attempt to reduce recidivism and improve the lives of participants at a key point.

It's a 10 week program with meetings at the library,

which is a resource with which many of these kids are not familiar. It's also not as intimidating as a juvenile detention center or even a courtroom.

**It works, too: only 10 percent of the 107 juveniles that participated in the program from Feb. 2007 to Dec. 2009 were arrested again, while 28 percent of kids that received probation during 2008 were arrested again.** Pretty remarkable results!

The ICMA report quotes one of the kids: "I learned to listen to other people's perspectives. I didn't ever realize people can look at the same situation and have different opinions about it."

Congrats to our Fairfax County Library system!

For more information on the program, visit their website (<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/cltl/>) or call Katie Strotman at 703-324-8333.



## ***Community Budget Town Hall Meetings***

Mt. Vernon Council Budget and Finance Committee	Walt Whitman Middle School	Thursday, February 24 7:30p.m.
<b>Providence Community Budget Meeting</b>	<b>Luther Jackson Middle School - Auditorium</b>	<b>Wednesday, March 2 7:00p.m.</b>
Braddock District Council	Kings Park Library	Wednesday, March 9 7:30p.m.
<b>Sully District</b>	<b>Chantilly High School</b>	<b>Monday, March 14 7:30p.m.</b>
Braddock District	Robinson Secondary High School - Recital Hall	Monday, March 14 7:30p.m.
<b>Dranesville District</b>	<b>Herndon Town Council - Herndon Town Council Chambers</b>	<b>Wednesday, March 16 7:00p.m.</b>
Hunter Mill District	Vienna Community Center - Multi-Purpose Room	Saturday, March 19 10:00a.m.
<b>Dranesville District</b>	<b>McLean Community Center - 1234 Ingleside Avenue</b>	<b>Wednesday, March 23 7:00p.m.</b>
Lee District Association	Franconia Governmental Center - Community Room	Wednesday, March 23 7:30p.m.
<b>Braddock and Springfield Districts</b>	<b>West Springfield High School - Cafeteria</b>	<b>Wednesday, March 23 7:30p.m.</b>
Springfield	Government Center Building - Conference Rooms 9-10	Thursday, March 24 7:00p.m.
<b>Dranesville District</b>	<b>Great Falls Library - 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls, VA</b>	<b>Thursday, March 24 7:00p.m.</b>
Hunter Mill District	Reston Community Center - Hunter Woods	Saturday, March 26 10:00a.m.
<b>Mason District Spring Town Meeting</b>	<b>Bren Mar Park Elementary - Cafeteria</b>	<b>Monday, March 28 7:00p.m.</b>